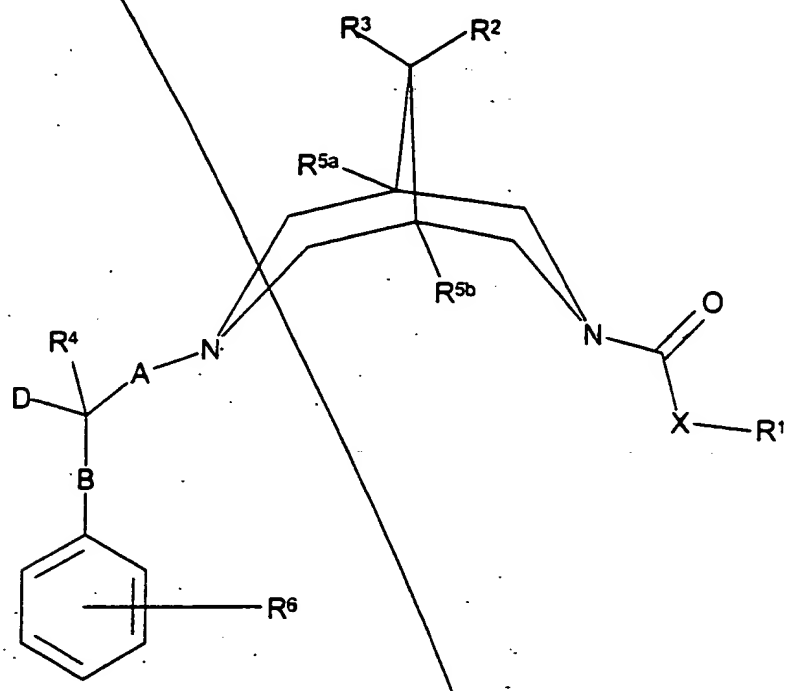
1 (Amended). A compound of formula I,



I

wherein

R^1 represents C_{1-12} alkyl, $-(CH_2)_a$-aryl, or $(CH_2)_aHet^1$ (all of which are optionally substituted by one or more substituents selected from -OH, halo, cyano, nitro, C_{1-4} alkyl and/or C_{1-4} alkoxy);

a represents 0, 1, 2, 3, or 4;

Het^1 represents a five to ten-membered heterocyclic ring containing one or more heteroatoms selected from oxygen, nitrogen and/or sulfur, and which also optionally includes one or more =O substituents;

X represents O or S;

R^{5a} and R^{5b} independently represent H or C_{1-3} alkyl;

R^2 and R^3 independently represent H, C_{1-4} alkyl (optionally substituted with one or more nitro or cyano groups), OR^7, $N(R^{7a})R^{7b}$, $OC(O)R^8$ or together form $-O-(CH_2)_2-O-$, $-(CH_2)_3-$, $-(CH_2)_4-$ or $-(CH_2)_5-$;

R^7 and R^8 independently represent H, C_{1-6} alkyl or $-(CH_2)_b$-aryl (which latter two groups are optionally substituted by one or more substituents selected from -OH, halo, cyano, nitro, C_{1-4} alkyl and/or C_{1-4} alkoxy);

R^{7a} and R^{7b} independently represent H or C_{1-6} alkyl;

b represents 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4;

R^4 represents H or C_{1-6} alkyl;

D represents H, -OH, or $-(CH_2)_cN(R^{10})(R^{11})$;

c represents 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4;

R^{10} represents H, C_{1-6} alkyl, $-(CH_2)_d$-aryl, $-C(NH)NH_2$, $-S(O)_2R^{13}$, $-[C(O)]_eN(R^{14})(R^{15})$, $-C(O)R^{16}$ or $-C(O)OR^{17}$;

e represents 1 or 2;

R^{11} represents H, C_{1-6} alkyl, $-C(O)R^{18}$ or $-(CH_2)_f$-aryl (which latter group is optionally substituted by one or more substituents selected from -OH, cyano, halo, amino, nitro, C_{1-6} alkyl and/or C_{1-6} alkoxy);

R^{14}, R^{15}, R^{16}, R^{17} and R^{18} independently represent H, C_{1-6} alkyl, Het^2 or $-(CH_2)_g$-aryl (which latter three groups are optionally substituted by one or more substituents selected from -OH, cyano, halo, amino, nitro, C_{1-6} alkyl and/or C_{1-6} alkoxy);

R^{13} represents C_{1-6} alkyl, aryl or $-(CH_2)_h$-aryl (all of which are all optionally substituted by one or more substituents chosen from halo, nitro, C_{1-6} alkyl and/or C_{1-6} alkoxy);

d, f, g and h independently represent 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4;

Het^2 represents a five to ten-membered heterocyclic ring containing one or more heteroatoms selected from oxygen, nitrogen and/or sulfur, and which also optionally includes one or more =O substituents;

R^6 represents one or more optional substituents selected from -OH, cyano, halo, amino, nitro, C_{1-6} alkyl (optionally terminated by $-N(H)C(O)OR^{18a}$), C_{1-6} alkoxy, $-C(O)N(H)R^{19}$, $-NHC(O)N(H)R^{20}$, $-N(H)S(O)_2R^{21}$ and/or $-OS(O)_2R^{22}$;

R^{19} and R^{20} independently represent H or C_{1-6} alkyl;

R^{18a}, R^{21} and R^{22} independently represent C_{1-6} alkyl;

A represents a single bond, C_{1-6} alkylene, $-N(R^{23})(CH_2)_j-$, $-O(CH_2)_j-$ or $-(CH_2)_JC(H)(OR^{23})(CH_2)_k-$ (in which latter three groups, the $-(CH_2)_j-$ group is attached to the bispidine nitrogen atom, and which latter four groups are all optionally substituted by one or more OH groups);

B represents a single bond, C_{1-4} alkylene, $-(CH_2)_mN(R^{24})-$, $(CH_2)_mS(O)_n-$, $-(CH_2)_mO-$ (in which three latter groups, the $\sim(CH_2)_m-$ group is attached to the carbon atom bearing D and R^4), $-C(O)N(R^{24})-$ (in which latter group, the -C(O)- group is attached to the carbon atom bearing D and R^4), $N(R^{24})C(O)O(CH_2)_m-$ or $-N(R^{24})(CH_2)_m-$ (in which latter two groups, the $N(R^{24})$ group is attached to the carbon atom bearing D and R^4);

j, k and m independently represent 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4;

n represents 0, 1 or 2;

R^{23} represents H, C_{1-6} alkyl or

R^{24} represents H or C_{1-6} alkyl;

R^{25} represents H, C_{1-6} alkyl, Het^3 or $-(CH_2)_p$-aryl (which latter two groups are optionally substituted by one or more substituents selected from -OH, cyano, halo, amino, nitro, C_{1-6} alkyl and/or C_{1-6} alkoxy);

Het^3 represents a five to ten-membered heterocyclic ring containing one or more heteroatoms selected from oxygen, nitrogen and/or sulfur, and which also optionally includes one or more =O substituents;

p represents 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, solvate or protected derivative thereof;

provided that:

(a) when D represents either H or -OH, and R^{5a} and R^{5b} both represent H, then at least one of R^2 and R^3 represents OR^7, $OC(O)R^8$ or C_{1-4} alkyl, which alkyl group is substituted with one or more nitro or cyano groups; and

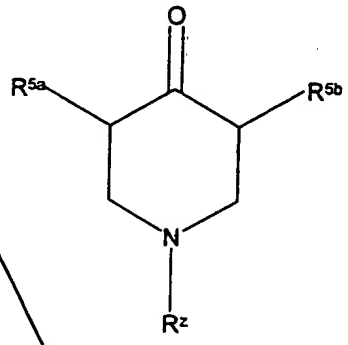
(b) when D represents -OH or $-(CH_2)_cN(R^{10})R^{11}$ in which c represents 0, then:-

(i) A does not represent $-N(R^{23})(CH_2)_j$-, $-O(CH_2)_j$- or $-CH_2)_JC(H)(OR^{23})(CH_2)_k$- (in which k is 0); and/or

(ii) m does not represent 0 when B represents $-(CH_2)_mN(R^{24})$-, $-(CH_2)_mS(O)_n$- or $-(CH_2)_mO$-.

23 (Amended). A compound of formula IV as defined in Claim 21, or a protected derivative thereof, provided that when R^{5a} and R^{5b} both represent H, then at least one of R^2 and R^3 represents OR^7, $OC(O)R^8$ or C_{1-4} alkyl, which alkyl group is substituted with one or more nitro or cyano groups.

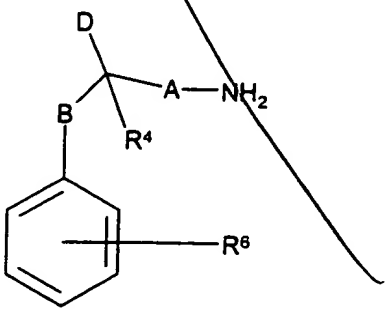
26 (Amended). A process for the preparation of a compound of formula VIII, as defined in Claim 24, or a compound of formula XVII, as defined in Claim 25, which comprises reaction of a compound of formula XXIX,



XXIX

wherein R^Z represents H or $-C(O)XR^1$ and R^1, R^{5a}, R^{5b} and X are as defined in Claim 1 with [(as appropriate) either:

(1)] a compound of formula XXX,



XXX

or a protected derivative thereof, wherein R^4, R^6, A, B and D are as defined in Claim 1, in all cases in the presence of a formaldehyde.

Please add the following new claim.

27 (New). A method as claimed in Claim 20, wherein the arrhythmia is an atrial or a ventricular arrhythmia.